

**David J. Bettez.** *Kentucky and the Great War: World War I on the Home Front.* Topics in Kentucky History Series. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016. 440 pp. \$45.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8131-6801-2.

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When the United States mobilized for World War I in 1917, did the different states have different experiences in convincing their citizens to cooperate with the central government? More than one hundred years later our understanding of the impact of the war on the state level is receiving the attention it needs. The list of works that deal with the conflict on the state, local level is sparse, but growing: some five works, covering Alabama (Martin T. Oliff's *The Great War in the Heart of Dixie: Alabama during World War I* [2008]), Alaska (Preston Jones's *The Fires of Patriotism: Alaskans in the Days of the First World War 1910-1920* [2013]), Arkansas (Michael D. Polston and Guy Lancaster's edited collection *To Can the Kaiser: Arkansas and the Great War* [2015]), Minnesota (Car H. Chrislock's *Watchdog of Loyalty: The Minnesota Commission of Public Safety during World War I* [1991]), New York (Ross J. Wilson's *New York and the First World War: Shaping an American City* [2014]), and Utah (Allan Kent Powell's *Utah and The Great War: The Beehive State and the World War I Experience* [2016]). Historians can now add Kentucky to the list.

David J. Bettez's overview of World War I and the domestic front in Kentucky has all the hallmarks of a major work covering over ten topics in 304 pages, not counting an up-to-date bibliogra-

phy, solid index, and in-depth endnote citations. Given this treatment, the sparse one-and-a-half-page introduction may seem inadequate, tempting the reader to move on to the main text. That would be a mistake. The key to the stories is in a combination of state newspapers and county records, as outlined in the introduction.

To this end, the author visited some 60 of the 120 counties. He confesses: "I usually use counties as a naming convention when identifying people and groups" due to subjects identifying with the county as closely as the state (p. 2). Bettez also checked records held at the University of Kentucky Special Collection in Lexington, University of Louisville Archives in Louisville, and archives at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green. Even given the spread of records, he fears that "this book might seem Louisville Centric" if for no other reason than the main players in policymaking and the main newspaper were in Louisville. His plea for others to take up the task to find even more is something that I know all too well. Bettez clearly wants to discover more personal stories like the stories of Kentucky's Medal of Honor winners Willie Sandlin and Samuel Woodfull. Simply put, even though his work is broad ranging, covering such varied topics as the Kentucky Council of Defense, opposition to the war, women and

children, the economy, religion, African Americans, and the impact on food and fuel, he acknowledges that the job is not done. "I hope this history serves as a catalyst for future studies," Bettez notes in the introduction (p. 2).

Bettez samples wartime histories made on the county level, compiled by local volunteers during and after the war as part of the wartime Kentucky Council of Defense. This civilian council was created by Kentucky Governor Augustus O. Stanley in April 1917 on the urging of Secretary of War Newton Baker. All states were urged to do this, but Kentucky went further by funding the effort. This council encouraged people to cooperate with the government on everything from saving and growing food to compiling local history. Besides the Council of Defense, the University of Kentucky hosted programs to train students for skills needed in military service. Through these methods, the state university was instrumental in wartime service.

The chapter on opposition to the war will be of interest especially to civil rights specialists because it covers two cases that have a bearing on the First and Fourth Amendment rights in relation to the June 15, 1917, Espionage Act. The act came too late to be used to silence Pastor H. Boyce Taylor from Murray but in time for a doubtful prosecution of a group of immigrants from Germany in northern Kentucky. In July 1918 a group of seven men were arrested and charged with treason, but it was a shoemaker in Covington, Charles Schoberg, and two co-defendants, J. Henry Kruse and Henry Feltman, who were tried and convicted. The conviction rested on a recording made by a dictograph, an early recording device, planted in the shoe shop. It would only be in the 1960s that privacy rights would gain ground, making this method subject to more oversight (p. 74).

The reach by the wartime government in the workplace was both positive and profound. As demand for coal and oil grew, pressure was placed on management for good wages, and safer work-

ing conditions, even as production grew enormously. While Jim Crow did not go away, the reader is left with the impression that a stable social order was achieved, due to that outside intervention. One sad thing that Kentucky had in common with other states was that these gains would not outlast war.

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